



NCDOT Wants to Help You Save Time, Money During the Holidays



NCDOT has tips to help you navigate the highways safely during the holiday travel season.

As families travel over the river and through the woods for celebrations, the N.C. Department of Transportation will suspend most road construction activities on major routes across the state to help make their trips a little smoother. By avoiding traffic delays, motorists can reach their destinations safely and efficiently, while cutting down on fuel consumption and costs. The list of closures will be available closer to the holidays on [our website](#). For real-time travel information at any time, visit the [Travel section](#) of the NCDOT website or follow NCDOT on [Twitter](#).

Here are some additional tips for navigating the highways safely during the holiday travel season:

- Leave early to get a head start on your drive. Travel at non-peak hours when possible.
- Stay alert. Even if work is suspended, you may encounter narrowed lanes and traffic shifts in work zones.
- Be patient and obey the posted speed limit.
- Use alternate routes, when possible, to avoid traffic

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Now

On the latest N.C. Transportation now, the department shares safety tips for drone use, DMV offices across the state get upgrades for next generation driver licenses, and NCDOT wants to hear what your favorite trails are around the state.

[Watch the latest N.C. Transportation Now.](#)

OBX Storm Damage Update

Kitty Hawk: Work completed Dec. 3 on repairs to a section of N.C. 12/Beach Road in Kitty Hawk near

congestion.

- Stay informed. Real-time travel information is available online and over the phone by dialing 511.
- Don't drive drowsy. Travel at times when you are normally awake, and take frequent breaks.
- Avoid distracted driving. When drivers stop focusing on the road ahead, they react more slowly to traffic conditions and are more likely to be involved in an accident.

Preliminary Work on Pea Island Interim Bridge Underway



Temporary Pea Island bridge on N.C. 12.

Drivers on N.C. 12 in Dare County are beginning to see activity at the site of the temporary Pea Island bridge over New Inlet.

NCDOT awarded a \$14.3 million contract to T.A. Loving Co. of Goldsboro in November for the construction of a new interim bridge made out of concrete that will replace the existing metal temporary bridge constructed in 2011 following Hurricane Irene.

Crews began surveying the week of Nov. 30 at the location of the new bridge. During the week of Dec. 7, crews will begin additional preparation work on the ground, including rebuilding a portion of N.C. 12 that was originally taken out for the construction of the previously-planned permanent bridge project.

Once complete, traffic will be shifted back to its original alignment and the pavement constructed for the onsite detour will be removed. Traffic is not expected to be impacted during this work.

In January 2016, crews will bring in materials in preparation of work starting in the coming months. Pipeline will be brought in for use in supplying water that will be used to install the bridge

Milepost 4 that was damaged during the storms in early October. The road has reopened to traffic.

A \$412,933 contract was awarded to Waff Contracting Inc. of Edenton for the reconstruction of the road between Kitty Hawk Road and Lillian Street, as well as the reconstruction of the dune that was washed away along this stretch of road.

Ocracoke: A \$321,315 contract was awarded to Carolina Marine Structures Inc. for the repair of a dune along N.C. 12 on Ocracoke Island that was also damaged during the storms in early October. Work began in December and is expected to be complete by February 2016, weather permitting. During this project, crews are bringing in sand from a dredge spoil site immediately adjacent to the Hatteras/Ocracoke ferry terminal and transferring the sand a few miles south to the site of the dune that was washed out.

[Learn more.](#)



Ferry Division Extends Peak Season Schedules In 2016

Summer travel season is getting a little longer on

pilings. Wooden mats will also be brought in that will be placed on the ground, allowing for crews to drive and move equipment up to and along the bridge construction site.

Actual construction of the Pea Island Interim bridge is scheduled to begin in March 2016. The bridge is expected to be open to traffic by April 2017.

[Learn more.](#)

New Transportation Projects and Updated Construction Schedules Presented for Northeastern N.C.

At their meeting this month in Raleigh, the N.C. Board of Transportation was presented with an updated list of new and rescheduled projects for their review. These changes, called amendments, were made possible thanks to Governor Pat McCrory's recently signed 2015 budget and will be voted on for approval in January as part of the 2016-2025 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - NCDOT's 10-year construction plan.

The state budget included additional funding for transportation through the elimination of the transfer from the Highway Fund to the General Fund and through other fee and rate changes resulting in an additional \$1.6 billion over the next 10 years for transportation construction.

For NCDOT's Division One, this includes nine new and accelerated highway projects; 16 new and accelerated aviation projects such as land purchases, runway and taxiway construction; and two ferry projects including a new River-Class ferry, as well as a new tug.

"The reforms I signed into law will get these roads built sooner," Governor McCrory said. "The primary purpose of the reforms was to ensure transportation funds were being spent on transportation projects and not diverted to other state programs."

In addition to the recently announced acceleration of construction for the Mid-Currituck Bridge over the Currituck Sound from Fiscal Year 2019 to FY 2017, the following are a sample of projects that will be added or moved up in Division One pending approval in January:

- Widen U.S. 158 in Dare County from U.S. 64 and N.C. 12, north to the Wright Memorial Bridge. Right of way scheduled for FY 25 with construction unfunded. This

NCDOT's Ferry System.

The North Carolina Ferry Division released its 2016 schedules this month, and while most 2015 departure times remained intact, the Ferry Division made a few adjustments to the timing of seasonal summer schedules after analyzing ridership data from previous years.

Among the changes:

- Summer schedules were lengthened by four weeks on the two Pamlico Sound routes (Swan Quarter-Ocracoke and Cedar Island-Ocracoke), now starting the first week of May and ending during the last week of September.
- 1. The summer schedule was adjusted forward on the Hatteras-Ocracoke route, starting later in the Spring (May 24), but ending later in the fall (October 10).

The only other 2016 schedule change is an added off-season weekend run on the Southport-Fort Fisher route. No changes were made to the Currituck-Knotts Island, Bayview-Aurora, or Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach routes.

[View the complete 2016 schedule.](#)

project will be subject to reprioritization in the next STIP; however, the funding allows for the planning process to begin;

- Improve the intersection of N.C. 12 and U.S. 158 in Dare County. Right of way scheduled for FY 24 with construction unfunded. This project will be subject to reprioritization in the next STIP; however, the funding allows for the planning process to begin;
- Modernize U.S. 258 in Northampton County from the Halifax County Line to the Rich Square Town Limits. Construction scheduled for FY 20; and
- Widen and resurface New Hope Road in Perquimans County from Union Hall Road to Woodland Church Road. Construction moved up from FY 19 to FY 18.

"I want to thank Governor McCrory, Transportation Secretary Nick Tennyson, Representative Bob Steinburg and Senator Bill Cook for recognizing the importance of advancing these projects and bringing needed transportation improvements to northeastern North Carolina," said Board of Transportation Member Malcolm Fearing. "These projects will not only bring jobs to our community, they will also improve the quality of life for those who call this region home." The department followed the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) law to identify new projects (either segments or entire projects) at the statewide, regional and division levels. The projects were identified from those previously scored based on the same weights and criteria (data) used to develop the 2016-2025 STIP.

[Learn more about these projects, as well as new and accelerated bridge replacement and rehabilitation projects for Division One in the STIP.](#)

NCDOT Offers Tips for Drone Safety



This holiday season, one of the most popular gifts could



NCDOT News

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literally fly off the shelves.

Whether they're called quadcopters, radio controlled planes, or any of the high-tech brand names, drones are expected to be big sellers this year, with some estimating as many as 700,000 will make their way into Americans' homes by the end of December.

All of these devices fall under the category of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). UAS technology is an exciting and evolving field, which can lead to confusion for both UAS owners and the general public. The N.C. Department of Transportation is offering tips to help UAS owners enjoy their new technology while protecting citizens' safety and privacy.

"We're proud of North Carolina's legacy of being first in manned flight," said NCDOT Secretary Nick Tennyson. "The academic and industry researchers in our state will make us a leader in unmanned flight as well."

NCDOT's Division of Aviation has established guidelines for UAS operation in North Carolina. Both the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the NCDOT Division of Aviation classify UAS flight operations by three categories:

- Recreational - Any UAS flight that is conducted solely for the purpose of recreation.
- Government - Any UAS flight conducted by a government entity to support their work.
- Commercial - Any UAS flight that serves a business purpose or provides a business benefit, even if that benefit is indirect.

Government and commercial UAS operators must adhere to state and federal requirements established by the North Carolina General Assembly and the FAA. Each classification is subject to specific regulations and guidelines.

Many of the UAS owners who receive a drone during this holiday season will use them for purely recreational purposes. While recreational UAS flights are not heavily regulated, the FAA and model aircraft enthusiast groups have established a number of guidelines which should be followed to ensure a fun and safe experience:

- Always fly below an altitude of 400 feet and fly within your direct line of sight.
- Do not fly within 5 miles of an airport, near stadiums or other public events, or for compensation.
- Do not fly UAS that weigh more than 55 pounds.
- Do not fly at night, even if your UAS is equipped with lights.

"UAS technology is fun and exciting, but it needs to be used responsibly," said Division of Aviation Director Bobby Walston. "These guidelines will help ensure the safety of people in the air and on the ground."

UAS operators, whether recreational, government or commercial, should keep in mind that North Carolina has laws governing drone use. UAS users are subject to all North Carolina laws, even if UAS technology is not specifically mentioned. Current and potential drone owners can find more information about state and federal UAS regulations on the Division of Aviation's [website](#).

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